

PETITION

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH HAMILTON,

WIDOW OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON, DECEASED,

PRAYING

*The patronage of Congress to the publication of the papers of her late husband.*

JANUARY 12, 1846.

Referred to the Committee on the Library, and ordered to be printed.

*To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America.*

In the last testament of my much lamented husband, General Alexander Hamilton, all his public and private papers were bequeathed to me for publication, as the only remaining legacy he had to bestow, having constantly devoted his best energies to promote the general welfare. In order to perform this sacred trust with proper fidelity, consistent with its delicacy and importance, I have concluded, after mature consideration, to solicit the patronage of the representatives of the American people. The duty thus devolved on me is a task of responsibility, which at my advanced age ought not longer to be delayed, in justice to myself, my husband, and my country. The papers embrace the period of the war of Independence, the formation and the adoption of the federal constitution, the organization of the national government, with a full and satisfactory development of the foreign and domestic policy of Washington's administration.

The subjects contained in the proposed publication are intimately blended with the vital interests and permanent prosperity of the American people, presenting the conduct and character of General Hamilton, on all national questions, as distinguished for enlightened patriotism and the most elevated system of policy.

The public mind will not only become disabused of the prejudices which exist in relation to the most eventful period of our history, but the measures and plans suggested by him will be found essentially necessary to sustain and advance the dignity, glory, and welfare of the country; they were invariably based on the most enlarged and immutable fundamental principles; and, with energetic forecast, he never lost sight, in his counsels and advice, of the nationality of the government of the Union. The principles advocated by General Hamilton have stood the test of practical experience; the most inflexible maxims of integrity and the purest honesty of

purpose gave to our fiscal arrangements, perfect stability, and in the establishment of a sound public credit the nation enjoyed the surest resources in the event of hostile collision or domestic calamity.

In the strictest accordance with the expansive destinies of the United States, he regarded with jealous attention every attempt at encroachment from Great Britain, watching with the deepest solicitude the relative and respective interests of every section of the confederation; and when our rights to the free navigation of the Mississippi were disturbed by Spain, through the influence of France, he promptly advised the immediate conquest of the Floridas and Louisiana, the adoption of which decisive course would have prevented much of the aggression which subsequently occurred.

The protection of commerce, the encouragement of manufactures, and the improvement of agriculture never failed to enjoy his fostering care, and I do not doubt that such will be the future judgment of the nation, whenever they shall have a perfect opportunity to consider the true character of his measures, disembarassed of fortuitous prejudices.

It is under such impressions I am induced to give publicity to the papers to which I have referred; but, as the appropriate manner of presenting them to the public would incur too heavy an expenditure for my limited means, I sincerely hope I may not be disappointed in the expectation that the federal government may deem it expedient to contribute their assistance.

In order, therefore, to secure the object I have in contemplation, the only patronage I am desirous of obtaining from Congress is an appropriation for the purchase of one thousand copies of each of the five volumes of the "Hamilton Works," with the understanding that whenever the publication shall be complete, the original correspondence, documents, and papers shall be deposited in the public archives, as national property.

ELIZ' TH HAMILTON.